

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 COM-02 PA-01 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01
CIAE-00 DODE-00 EB-08 H-01 INR-10 INT-05 L-03
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SS-15 STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 /116 W
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R 102003Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1327
INFO DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY WASHDC
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 15004

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: ENRG FR
SUBJ: SOLAR ENERGY COMMISSION (CES)

REF: PARIS 10909 AND PREVIOUS

1. SUMMARY: EMBOFFS MET NEWLY APPOINTED COMMISSAIRE A L'ENERGIE SOLAIRE HENRY DURAND FIRDAY, APRIL 21. DURAND WAS RECENTLY NAMED TO HEAD THIS AGENCY WHOSE CREATION WAS ANNOUNCED IN JAN 25 PRESS CONFERENCE. ROLE OF CES THEN AND SUBSEQUENTLY STILL NOT TOTALLY DEFINED. IT IS TO COME INTO EXISTENCE OFFICIALLY ON MAY 1 AND UNDER THE POLICY GUIDANCE OF THE INDUSTRY MINISTRY. OUR INTERVIEW WITH DURAND CONFIRMED PREVIOUSLY REPORTED FACTS AND SURFACED HIS APPREHENSION CONCERNING CES. END SUMMARY.

2. DURAND STATED THAT THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL AND THE OVERALL BUDGET OF THE ORGANIZATION IS STILL NOT TOTALLY
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DETERMINED. HE REMARKED RATHER WISTFULLY THAT HE WAS GRATEFUL TO HIS EMPLOYERS IN HIS PREVIOUS POSITION WHO CONTINUE TO PAY HIM. THERE WAS A STRONG IMPLICATION THAT HE WAS WORKING FULL TIME ON CES AFFAIRS.

3. WHEN ASKED WHETHER THE CES WILL EVENTUALLY TAKE OVER SUPERVISORY ROLE DIRECTLY FROM PRESENT SOLAR ENERGY

ACTIVITIES, HE SAID HE PERSONALLY WOULD NOT WANT THAT
KIND OF ROLE. HE HAS NO DESIRE, HE SAID, TO GET
INVOLVED IN LARGE SCALE ADMINISTRATION OR BUDGET MATTERS.
HIS HOPES FOR THE AGENCY SEEM TO US TO BE RATHER MORE
MODEST THAN WHAT HAD BEEN PORTRAYED BY OTHER SOURCES.
DURAND EXPECTS TO HAVE NO MORE THAN 5 OR 6 PEOPLE ON
BOARD AND TO EXPAND OVER THE COURSE OF
THE NEXT 3 YEARS TO 40 OR 50. AS FOR PIRDES
(PROGRAMME INTERDISCIPLINAIRE POUR L'ENERGIE SOLAIRE)
WITH WHICH WE HAVE BEEN DEALING RELATIVE TO BILATERAL
COOPERATION WITH THE US ON SOLAR ENERGY, DURAND THOUGHT
THIS ORGANIZATION MIGHT WELL BE GIVEN A MORE
INDEPENDENT STATUS. ITS DIRECTOR, MICHEL RODOT, IS AN
OFFICIAL OF THE CENTRE NATIONAL POUR LA RECHERCHE
SCIENTIFIQUE (CNRS).

4. COMMENT: HENRY DURAND APPEARS TO US TO BE VERY
HIGHLY QUALIFIED INDEED FOR THE DIRECTION OF A SOLAR
ENERGY COMMISSION. IF DURAND'S PRESENT OUTLOOK
CONTINUES, IT VERY LIKELY WILL BE PRIMARILY A MECHANISM
FOR THE PRODUCTION AND TRANSMISSION OF IDEAS AND,
SECONDARILY, A BODY FOR COORDINATING GOV ACTIVITIES.
IT CERTAINLY DOES NOT LOOK AS IF IT WILL BECOME THE
HEADQUARTERS OF ANY KIND OF SOLAR TZAR. DURAND AT THE
MOMENT SEEMS TO US TO WONDER WHAT HE HAS GOTTEN INTO.
IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE HOW THIS ORGANIZATION
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FARES UNDER AN INDUSTRY MINISTRY HEADED BY A FORMER
DIRECTOR OF THE FRENCH ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION.
HARTMAN

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NNN

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